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TO RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP WASHINGTON DC 0020
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3516
INFO RUEHJB/AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA 1589
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RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 0687
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0179

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SUBJECT: MEETING WITH GOR ON MCC THRESHOLD PROGRAM

1. (SBU) Summary. Ambassador and AID Director met on November 21 with Ambassador Sezibera and other GOR staff on the just-announced Millennium Challenge Corporation Threshold program. Sezibera pronounced the GOR committed to a successful program, and anxious to get to work with mission and MCC staff. Ambassador emphasized the importance of a unified GOR team possessed of authority to make decisions and give clear direction to the Rwandan effort. Sezibera said ongoing internal reviews were aimed at putting in place a strong GOR team with solid ideas to present to the visiting MCC team. End summary.

2. (SBU) Ambassador, USAID Director, DCM and other mission staff met with Great Lakes Special Envoy Ambassador Richard Sezibera, NEPAD Special Advisor Francis Gatere and representatives of the Finance, Justice and Local Government ministries on November 21 to discuss the just announced selection of Rwanda as a Threshold Program participant. Mission staff distributed to and discussed with the Rwandan participants a packet of materials on the MCC program, including a sample Threshold Concept Paper and Threshold Country Plan, and a mission-produced review of GOR institutions that could potentially be the subject of Threshold Program attention (this document e-mailed to our State Department desk officer).

3. (SBU) Ambassador explained that USAID in Kigali would administer the Threshold Program funds in concert with MCC in Washington and embassy staff. Of great importance, said the Ambassador, would be a unified team with a strong coordinator to push the process forward from the Rwandan side. Ambassador announced provisional dates for the visit of an MCC team in early December. He noted that the GOR would be dealing with experienced MCC administrators and program officers who would welcome and indeed expect a Rwandan-driven process with much give and take, and negotiating of program goals and concepts.

4. (SBU) Sezibera pledged a cohesive GOR team empowered to make decisions and push the Threshold process to completion. The GOR was anxious to work closely with the MCC and the USG mission in Rwanda, and an "internal review" was underway, meant to establish GOR team leadership and develop program ideas in advance of the MCC team arrival. We have three goals, he said: design the Threshold Program with the USG, successfully complete Threshold design and implementation, and secure full Millennium Challenge Account Compact eligibility. "We will work with you to achieve all three," he said.

5. (SBU) Ambassador cautioned that qualification for the

Threshold Program did not automatically mean program monies would flow. Several neighboring states had failed to finalize their Threshold programs, for example, and were making no progress toward MCA Compact eligibility. Ambassador Sezibera in response acknowledged the importance of a committed government and a well-designed program. "We understand our responsibilities," he said.

¶6. (SBU) Comment. Unpleasantly surprised at the fall of several of the six MCC Ruling Justly indicators for FY 2007, as well as several World Bank indicators, the GOR had protested the accuracy of some of the scoring sources (as had this mission, other diplomatic missions, and the local World Bank office). It is pleased that MCC has chosen it for Threshold status, and appears to grasp the focused and professional effort it must make to see those scores rise. End comment.

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